

# *Macdonough Centennial*

VERGENNES, VERMONT

1814

1914

## The Macdonough Centennial

**T**HE crowning achievement of the War of 1812 was the victory of the American fleet on Lake Champlain under the command of Commodore Thomas Macdonough. This decisive Naval victory, in which an inferior fleet defeated a superior British foe, after one of the most severely contested battles in history is deemed to be worthy of fitting commemoration on account of its great historical significance. Thereafter the supremacy of democracy and the progress of its ideals in our country were never again contested by any foreign power.

No other Naval battle in our history has had a more profound effect upon our country's destiny. The great naval victories that preceded this event are deserving of all the credit that has been accorded them, but it remained for history to award to the victory achieved by Macdonough and his loyal co-patriots at the Battle of Plattsburgh, the credit for the final and complete settlement of the momentous conflict in the Western Hemisphere.

It not only resulted in the destruction or capture of the entire British fleet, but it also prevented the further invasion of the British forces from Canada, under command of Sir George Provost. The British army outnumbering our land forces four to one had marched upon Plattsburgh, at the same time as the superior British fleet came up the lake from the North.

It was the plan of the combined forces to destroy the American fleet on Lake Champlain and capture or scatter our land forces in the Champlain Valley. Thereupon the British army could proceed down the Hudson and re-establish the authority of the British Government over New York and New England, if not over the entire country. This signal victory, in one of the greatest decisive battles of the world's history, remained for Macdonough and his co-patriots of the American fleet.

At the same time that Macdonough's fleet was inflicting a severe defeat upon the British fleet commanded by Commodore Downie, the American land forces were successfully repelling the attack of the British army near by on the banks of the Saranac river. In this engagement great credit has been recorded to the gallant services rendered by the militia and volunteers, who with the regular troops comprised the American army under the able leadership of General Alexander Macomb.

Numbered among these forces were two thousand five hundred Vermont volunteers under the command of General Samuel Strong and Major Jesse Lyman, both resident of Vergennes, who rallied to the aid of their countrymen on the opposite side of the lake and rendered valuable aid in repelling the invasion of the British army from Canada.

The patriotism and gallantry of the citizen soldiers of those days will never cease to cause the bosom to swell with pride in American citizenship.

The result of this dual battle was decisive of the war, and the signing of the treaty of peace followed three months later.

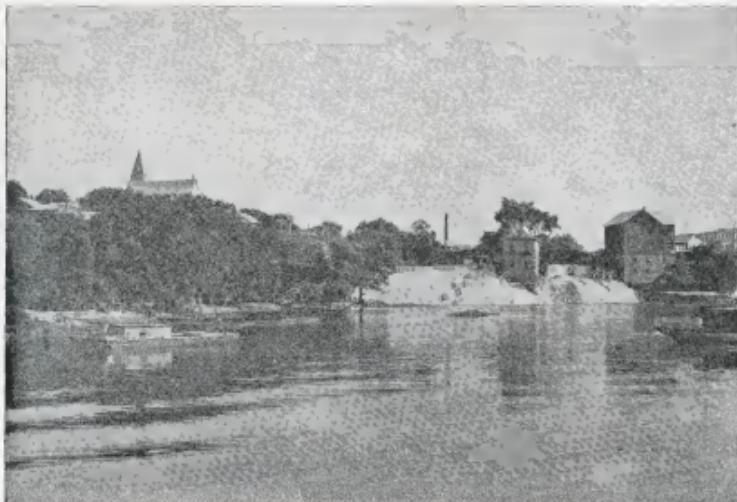
Thus we find sufficient warrant for the honor bestowed in memory of this devout Christian gentleman, this great naval hero and his brave band of loyal patriots, who on September 11, 1814, at Plattsburgh Bay on

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Lake Champlain, carried an American fleet to victory in the last naval battle between English-speaking nations. The honor and recognition for the heroic deeds of Macdonough and his co-patriots in the War of 1812, attest and measure the greatness of the present, while they supply an inspiration and incentive for still nobler achievements. They have a strong tendency to stimulate patriotism and deep appreciation of the worthy deeds which made possible the nation's existence, and gave nobility to its national life.

## Building of the Fleet at Vergennes

THE people of Vergennes and the surrounding towns in the Champlain Valley have a special feeling of pride in commemorating this important event, on account of the fact that Macdonough's fleet was constructed and fitted out at Vergennes, and a preliminary engagement of no small importance took place at Fort Cassin, at the mouth of Otter Creek. Had the British fleet been successful in bottling up the ships of Macdonough in the river, the battle of Plattsburgh might have been recorded in a different way.



THE BASIN AND FALLS ON OTTER CREEK  
Where the Fleet was Built

At the outbreak of the War of 1812 it was evident that the British would attempt to gain control of Lakes Champlain, Erie and Ontario; with the poor equipment of the American Navy available for inland waters, the plans of the British received very little opposition from this Nation. But on September 28th, 1812, Commodore Macdonough (at that time a Lieutenant) was ordered to take "immediate command of the naval forces on Lake Champlain" and his orders from the Secretary of the Navy contained these instructions: "You are to understand that on no account are you to suffer the enemy to gain the ascendancy on Lake

Champlain, and as you have now unlimited authority to procure the necessary resources of men, materials and munitions for that purpose, I rely upon your efficient and prudent use of the authority vested in you."

Macdonough was located at Portland, Maine, where he was in command of a division of gun boats when ordered to Lake Champlain, and made the journey to Burlington, Vermont, on horse-back. He crossed the lake to Plattsburgh to confer with the officers of the land forces and then went to Whitehall to fit out the two gunboats and the sloops "Hunter" and "Bull Dog" for service. Macdonough went into winter quarters at Shelburne early in December and spent the winter there and at Burlington putting his ships in better condition. Early in the summer of 1813 his two sloops were captured near Isle Aux Noix by the British forces, and this disaster sadly crippled his little fleet and gave the British immediate control of the lake.

At this time Macdonough was promoted to the rank of Master Commandant; an unusual honor for a man of twenty-nine years of age.

The British troops, emboldened by their success in capturing the American sloops, proceeded to capture merchant vessels, burn property and harass the people in many ways along both sides of the lake.

Up to this time the naval activities in the lake region had been confined principally to the Great Lakes, but Lake Champlain was now to become the scene of the greatest event of the War.

On December 19th, 1813, Macdonough took his vessels into Otter Creek for winter quarters at "the button woods," three fourths of a mile above Dead Creek. Commodore Macdonough made his headquarters at Vergennes, and during the winter was engaged in building several galleys and gunboats to carry two guns each.

Macdonough selected Vergennes on account of its great natural advantages for protection from attack by the British, while he was fitting out his new boats. Situated at the head of navigation on Otter Creek, seven miles from its mouth, with a road leading directly to Burlington, twenty-two miles north; another leading to Boston two hundred and twenty-five miles to the southeast; and one to the south, leading to Troy and New York. Macdonough, after careful consideration, decided that Vergennes afforded a harbor of safety to carry out his preparations for the great battle that was to follow.

Vergennes was also protected by the troops at Burlington on the north; Dead Creek and its contiguous marshes on the south; and the narrowness and crookedness of the Otter, precluded the possibility of an attack by water. With this protection the work could go on without much danger of interference.

On February 8th intelligence reached Macdonough at Vergennes that the British were building new boats at Isle Aux Noix, and hereafter work went forward with renewed energy.

The Navy Department had sent to Vergennes a ship builder, Mr. Browne from New York City, who had guaranteed to launch a ship of twenty-four guns in sixty days. On March second the "Saratoga's" timbers were standing in the forest; on the seventh her keel was laid and on the eleventh of April she took the water—Forty Days from the Living Tree to the Man of War!

Vergennes had many industries in those days, including a blast furnace, a wire factory and a rolling mill; besides grist, saw and fulling mills.

Macdonough had received word from Plattsburgh that the British were planning to sail to the mouth of Otter Creek for the purpose of

blocking up the river and preventing the fleet from entering the lake. Batteries were immediately erected at the mouth of Otter Creek, the north bank was fortified and afterwards called Fort Cassin.

On May 14th the British fleet made the anticipated attack on Fort Cassin, planning to capture it, blockade the creek and then prevent the American fleet from getting out to the lake. The defense of Fort Cassin was lead by the gallant young Lieutenant Cassin, (the fort being named after him), who afterwards won praise for his gallantry in command of the "Ticonderoga" at Plattsburgh Bay.

On application, Governor Chittenden ordered out the militia in Franklin, Chittenden and Addison counties; a thousand of these were stationed at Vergennes.

From the 16th to the 20th of April, 1814, Governor Chittenden was in Vergennes with General Wilkinson, who was in command of the United States troops at Champlain, N. Y.



THE BIXBY MEMORIAL LIBRARY

There was great fear and anxiety among the citizens of Vergennes at the time of the attack at Fort Cassin, but the militia and volunteers responded nobly to the call for soldiers to defend the work of the fleet. The impression they made on the Commander of the Sloop "Linnet" of the British fleet, which attacked Fort Cassin, was represented in a letter he wrote to his superior officers. "The Battery appeared to be strongly manned by Artillerymen, and the enemy's gunboats were there with many seamen landed. I think I had a view of my adversary, Commodore Macdonough. Every tree on the lake shore seemed to have a "Jonathan" stationed behind it."

Macdonough, during his stay at Vergennes was extremely popular with all his acquaintances in this vicinity. His office was in the second story of a wooden building that stood where Chamberlain Foote and Company's store is now located, the lower room being used for a guard house. One of the militia men accidentally discharged his musket, the ball passing through the floor and near Macdonough. In one of the consultations

as to dismissing the militia, Macdonough said, "If you will take your militia home I will take care of the fleet. I am in more danger from your men than from the enemy."

The work of completing the vessels was rushed with all possible speed under aggravating difficulties. When the "Saratoga," MacDonough's flagship, was launched, neither her guns or other necessary equipment had been received. The roads were so bad that it took eighty teams to carry one consignment of naval stores from Troy to Vergennes. Another large quantity of shot was brought with difficulty from Boston, and it was necessary to cast one thousand 32-pound balls at Vergennes.

But with all these difficulties, which seemed almost unsurmountable, the "Saratoga," "Ticonderoga," "Preble" and six gunboats sailed out of Otter Creek on the 26th of May, 1814, followed soon after by the "President," "Montgomery" and four more gunboats, and three days later the squadron came to anchor in Plattsburgh Bay ready for action.

## Life of Commodore Macdonough

**T**HOMAS MACDONOUGH was born in the county of New Castle, Delaware, on the 23rd of December, 1783. His father was a physician and a major in the Continental Army, served with honor as an officer in the Revolution, and his own brother James was a midshipman in the Navy. The Commodore's early life was spent under influences that would tend to inspire in the mind of the young man a spirit of true patriotism.

For a few years before entering the navy Macdonough was a clerk in a store in Middletown. In February, 1800, the Commodore received from President Adams, a warrant as midshipman in the United States Navy, and soon after his appointment he joined the United States ship "Ganges" and proceeded to the West Indies against the French, then at war with the United States. Macdonough with several others contracted a fever and was sent on shore at Havana.

After he gained his health he again joined the "Ganges" on her second cruise to the West Indies. He then joined the frigate "Constellation" and sailed for the Mediterranean, and afterward joined the frigate "Philadelphia," and was with Decatur in the Mediterranean, where he behaved with great gallantry.

From the "Philadelphia" he went to the schooner "Enterprise", was chosen a lieutenant and won great fame for his bravery at Tripoli in 1806.

After these heroic adventures he was commissioned to join Captain Isaac Hull at Middletown, Conn., where he met the lady who a few years later became his wife. He afterwards was with the "Wasp", the "John Adams" and the "Essex", along the Atlantic Coast.

After war was declared against Great Britain he was ordered to command the Portland Station, where there were several fine gunboats. On account of his record for bravery and capability as an officer he was then selected by President Madison to take command of the vessels on Lake Champlain. Here he won unfading laurels, as is so well recorded in the historical works of Admiral Mahan's "Sea Power in its Relations to the War of 1812"; Colonel Theodore Roosevelt's "The Naval War of 1912"; and the writings of Rodney Macdonough, a grandson of the Commodore.

Macdonough was married December 12th, 1812, in Middletown, Connecticut, to Lucy Ann Shaler, daughter of Nathaniel and Lucretia Ann

Shaler of Middletown. Ten children were born to Commodore and Mrs. Macdonough, five of whom died young.

Macdonough as a commanding officer, although only about thirty years old, possessed a wonderful executive ability and always had the respect and love of the officers and men under him. In 1809, when he was ordered from command of the United States frigate "Essex" to take charge of the gunboats on Long Island Sound, the crew of the "Essex" signed and presented him with a letter expressing their "heartfelt sorrow," and in 1820 the crew of the "Guerriere" presented him with a handsome sword as a token of their appreciation of his efforts to promote the "comfort and happiness of his men."

Macdonough was famous for his acts of bravery and gallantry. During the engagement at Plattsburgh "Macdonough himself worked like a common sailor, in pointing and handling a favorite gun. While bending over to sight it, a round shot cut in two the spanker boom, which fell on his head and struck him senseless for two or three minutes; he then jumped to his feet and continued as before, when a shot took off the head of the captain of the gun crew and drove it in his face with such force as to knock him to the other side of the deck. Then his ship was twice set on fire by the hot shot of the enemy." But Macdonough, with undaunted courage finally led his men to victory.

Macdonough had the reputation of "fearing no man, but always possessing profound respect for the will of the Almighty God." The crew of the "Saratoga" knelt in silent prayer before the Battle of Plattsburgh, and Macdonough's report of the victory to the Secretary of the Navy showed the true inward spirit of the man. "The Almighty has been pleased to grant us a signal victory on Lake Champlain in the capture of one frigate, one brig and two sloops of war of the enemy."

"In personal appearance Commodore Macdonough was tall, dignified and commanding. His features were regular and pleasing. His hair and complexion were light and his eyes were blue, but he had a firm and steady look. His early country training gave him an active, vigorous frame."

Commodore Macdonough died of pulmonary consumption on the 10th of November, 1825, on board the merchant brig "Edwin," when about six hundred miles east of New York, while he was on his way home from Gibraltar, where he had been bravely fighting against the disease he had contracted during his years of toil, trouble and worry on Lake Champlain. He gave his life for his country and died at the age of only forty-one years.

"He was buried at Middletown, Conn., beside his devoted wife in the soil he loved, fought and died for. His monument bears this simple inscription:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF  
COMMODORE THOMAS MACDONOUGH  
OF THE U. S. NAVY.

He was born in the State of Delaware, in December, 1783 and died at sea of pulmonary consumption while on his return from the command of the American squadron in the Mediterranean on the 10th of November, 1825. He was distinguished in the world as the Hero of Lake Champlain; in the Church of Christ as a faithful, zealous and consistent christian; in the community where he resided when absent from professional duties as an amiable, upright and valuable citizen."

## The Centennial Celebration in 1914

**S**OON after the Lake Champlain Ter-Centenary Celebration of 1909, the people of Vergennes and the surrounding towns of the Champlain Valley, being actuated by a feeling of pride for the noble deeds of patriotism exemplified by Commodore Macdonough and his co-patriots, decided that the one hundredth anniversary of this important historical event should not go unnoticed.

In recognition of the fact that Macdonough's fleet was built at Vergennes in the Spring of 1814, appreciating also, that an important preliminary engagement was fought at Fort Cassin at the mouth of Otter Creek, and in memory of the honor of the brave and loyal patriots of the Vermont Volunteers who left their homes and families to cross the lake and join hands in a neighborhood battle against the invasion of the British, a fitting Centennial Celebration was advocated, and this movement immediately met with a hearty response from patriot citizens all over the State.

An appeal was made to the legislature of Vermont in 1912, for an appropriation for a memorial to Macdonough and his co-patriots, and to commemorate the fitting out of the fleet at Vergennes in 1814. The legislature of Vermont appropriated \$4,000 for this purpose and the Macdonough Commission of Vermont was created to erect a memorial at Vergennes and provide for appropriate dedicatory ceremonies.

About the same time a similar Commission was created in New York State and the two Commissions, having mutual interests decided to join hands and petition the United States Congress for National recognition of this worthy project.

Congress responded liberally with an appropriation of \$140,000 for permanent memorials on Lake Champlain, and \$15,000 of this amount was designated for the use of the Vermont Commission for their memorial at Vergennes. The City of Vergennes also appropriated \$1000 toward the expenses of a fitting celebration.

As the bill for the memorials only recently passed Congress, it was not possible to have the monuments ready for the Centennials, either at Plattsburgh or Vergennes, but they will be erected as soon as the plans can be formulated and approved by the Secretary of War, as provided under the Act of Congress. The memorial at Vergennes will probably be located on the City Park, this site having been selected on account of its central and convenient location.

The Macdonough Commission has labored long and untiringly to make this event a success. The members of the Commission have sacrificed much time and expense in promoting the plans for the Centennial. It has been necessary for committees of the Commission to make several trips to Washington, to appear before the committees of Congress, and great praise is due the members of the Commission for the success they have achieved in their arduous duties.

The Commission has had the unqualified support of Governor Allen M. Fletcher of Vermont, who has given invaluable aid in furthering the preliminary plans, and providing the State Militia for the Celebration.

As the appropriations from the State and Congress must be used entirely for a memorial, the Commission has been confronted with an almost impossible task of raising the necessary funds for appropriate exercises during the Centennial, and the thanks of the Commission and members of the Macdonough Memorial Association are cordially extended to

## Macdonough Commission of Vermont



Senator R. W. McCuea  
*Secretary*



Hon. Willard F. Barnes  
*Treasurer*



Judge Frank L. Fish



Governor Allen M. Fletcher  
*Chairman*



Rev. L. A. Vezina  
*Vice-Chairman*



Hon. John H. Donnelly



Hon. Chas. H. Darling



Mr. Harry C. Shaw

the many friends in the State and former residents who responded so liberally to the fund for necessary expenses.

The plans for the Celebration were made by the Vermont Commission and the Macdonough Memorial Association of Vergennes, an organization formed in 1909, for the purpose of honoring the memory of Commodore Macdonough, Major General Strong and Lieutenant Stephen Cassin, and to provide for the building of a suitable memorial.

The officers and various committees of the Macdonough Memorial Association include nearly every citizen of Vergennes and many from surrounding towns in the Champlain Valley. The success of this celebration is due in no small measure to the active and enthusiastic work of the officers and members of the local organization, who have rendered yeoman service in carrying out the details of the plans for the Centennial Celebration.

Thus we find the brief history of the movement, to provide a fitting celebration in commemoration of the fitting out of the American fleet at Vergennes in 1814 and in memory of the gallant Commander, Commodore Thomas Macdonough and his co-patriots.

The Commission is greatly indebted to the Vermont Publicity Bureau for its assistance in the publication of this program. This Bureau has issued booklets entitled, "Vermont, the Land of Green Mountains," and "Industrial Vermont." Out of State visitors can procure copies by addressing Guy W. Bailey, Secretary of State, Essex Junction, Vt. Much of the historical information in this pamphlet was obtained from the histories of Admiral Maban, Col. Theodore Roosevelt, Rodney Macdonough, a grandson of the famous Commodore, and the historical literature published by the New York State Commission of the Plattsburgh Centenary.

The Plattsburgh Centenary will be held September 6th to 11th, 1914, and the Macdonough Commission of Vermont, with a large number of friends will go to Plattsburg, N. Y., for the Celebration, Friday, September 11th.

## Program of the Centennial Exercises

### Patriot's Day, September 6th

#### SUNDAY FORENOON AT VERGENNES

Ten-thirty o'clock. Special Services in all Churches of the City.

#### SUNDAY AFTERNOON AT VERGENNES

Two-thirty o'clock

##### Memorial Mass Meeting

The Rev. L. A. Vezina, Presiding Officer

Prayer, Rev. R. G. Woodbridge

Welcome to the City: Hon. John A. Harrington, Mayor of Vergennes.

"Hail Gentle Peace": Chorus of 100 voices, under the direction of Miss Effie Stewart of New York.

Historical Address: Mr. Rodney Macdonough of Boston, Mass.

"America, The Beautiful": Chorus.

Address: Hon. Wm. P. Dillingham, U. S. Senator from Vermont.

"My Country 'Tis of Thee": Chorus and Audience.

Benediction: Rev. Thomas Stevenson.

SUNDAY EVENING AT VERGENNES

- 7:30 Band Concert.

**Naval Day, September 7th**

MONDAY FORENOON AT VERGENNES

- 9:00 Band Concert, Proctor Band.  
10:00 Hose Races and Ladder Exhibition on Main Street.  
11:00 Athletic Events.

MONDAY AFTERNOON AT VERGENNES

- 2:30 Base Ball Game.  
4:00 Exhibition Drills and Maneuvers by United States Cavalry and Vermont National Guard.

MONDAY AFTERNOON AT FORT CASSIN

- 12:30 Excursion boats leave Vergennes for Fort Cassin  
1:00 Naval Parade leaves Vergennes, sailing down the river to the lake, encircling Diamond Island, where it will be reviewed by Admiral Clark, the Secretary of the Navy, the Governor of Vermont and other prominent officials.  
2:30 Official Exercises, Governor Allen M. Fletcher, presiding.  
Prayer, Rev. George F. Harvey  
Selection by the Proctor Band.  
Address, Hon. Henry W. Hill of Buffalo, N. Y.  
Historical Address, Hon. Joseph A. DeBoer of Montpelier.  
Short Speeches by the Secretary of the Navy and other Prominent Guests.  
Music by the Band.  
4:30 Return Parade up the river to Vergennes.  
6:00 Luncheon to Members of the Champlain Yacht Club and invited Guests.

MONDAY EVENING AT VERGENNES

- 7:00 Band Concert.  
8:00 Illuminated display and fireworks on and near the river.

**Centennial Day, September 8th**

TUESDAY MORNING AT VERGENNES

- 5:30 Sunrise Salutes, by ancient guns of Macdonough's time.  
6:00 Proclamation of Heralds with flourish of trumpets.  
7:00 Ringing of Church Bells throughout the city.  
9:00 Band Concert, Vergennes City Band.  
10:00 Dedication of Marker by Seth Warner Chapter, D. A. R., junction of Comfort and Water Streets, to commemorate the building of Macdonough's fleet.  
Music by Sherman's Military Band and Quartette.  
Invocation, Rev. R. G. Woodbridge.  
Unveiling of Marker, Mrs. J. G. Hirdes, Honorary Regent.  
Presentation of Marker, Mrs. H. P. Fisher, Regent.  
Acceptance of Marker, Mayor J. A. Harrington.  
Address, Dr. Guy P. Benton, Burlington.  
Music, Quartette.  
11:00 Salute to the President of the United States, fired by the U. S. Cavalry Troops.  
12:00 Official Luncheon to President and Official Guests.

TUESDAY AFTERNOON AT VERGENNES

- 1:00 Grand Parade of State Militia, U. S. Cavalry Troops from Fort Ethan Allen, Fire Companies, Fraternal Organizations, Boy Scouts from Industrial School, Floats and Decorated Automobiles, Several Bands of Music. Reviewed by Court of Honor, by the President and Official Party
- 2:00 "The Living Flag," produced by sixty children, under the direction of Miss Ada Crosby, near the reviewing stand.
- 2:30 Official Exercises. Governor Allen M. Fletcher, presiding officer. Prayer, Rev. Wm. H. Williamson of St. Pauls Episcopal Church. Address, The Hon. Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy. Chorus, "Hail Gentle Peace."
- Address, Hon. Rodney Macdonough.
- Chorus, "America the Beautiful."
- Short Speeches by Senator Willard Saulsbury from Delaware, the Rev. John P. Chidwick of the New York Commission and other prominent guests.
- Breaking of ground for Macdonough Memorial.
- Chorus, "The Star Spangled Banner."
- Benediction.
- 5:30 Band Concert, Combined Concert Bands.
- 6:30 Official Banquet in City Hall.
- Judge Frank L. Fish, presiding officer, representing Macdonough Commission.
- Honorable Frank L. Greene, Toastmaster.
- Responses by distinguished guests.
- Senator Willard Saulsbury, from Delaware.
- Governor Allen M. Fletcher of Vermont.
- Honorable Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the United States Navy.
- Honorable Thomas F. Conway, Vice-Chairman New York Commission.
- Justice William Renwick Riddell.
- Justice of the Supreme Court, Ontario.
- Honorable Frank Plumley, Congressman of Vermont.
- Lieutenant-Governor Frank E. Howe of Vermont.
- Informal Toasts by prominent guests. Music by selected orchestra.
- 7:00 Band Concert.
- 7:30 Jubilee Carnival with elaborate ceremonies accompanying the Coronation of the Queen.
- 8:00 Parade of Masqueraders and Merry Makers reviewed by the Queen and Royal Party.
- 9:00 Masquerade Ball and General Festivities.
- During the Celebration a fine collection of historical relics and other objects of interest of Macdonough's time will be open for public inspection at the Bixby Memorial Library.
- This program is subject to a few changes. The President of the United States, the Vice-President, the Secretary of War and prominent Canadian officials have been invited, and will be present if their official duties will permit.

**The Macdonough Commission of Vermont**

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REV. L. A. VEZINA	- - - - -	Vice-Chairman
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HON. JOHN H. DONNELLY	- - - - -	Vergennes, Vermont
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## The City of Vergennes

**T**HE Centennial Celebration is held at Vergennes where the ships were constructed with which Commodore Macdonough defeated the British fleet at Plattsburgh in 1814.

Vergennes is located in the beautiful Champlain Valley on Otter Creek, about seven miles from Lake Champlain. The first settlement was made here in 1766 by Donald McIntosh, a Scotchman, who came to America with General Wolfe's Army. Fort William was built here during the Revolutionary War.

In 1788 the City of Vergennes was incorporated, its area being nearly two square miles. One square mile was taken from Ferrisburgh and the remainder from Panton and New Haven. Only two New England cities, Hartford and New Haven, Conn., were incorporated before Vergennes.

In 1785 Hector St. John De Crevecoeur, the French consul at New York suggested to his friend, General Ethan Allen, that some of the new Vermont towns be named in honor of well known Frenchmen on account of the valuable aid rendered this nation by Lafayette and his associates during the Revolutionary war.

General Allen took the matter up with the Governor and Council and when a city was laid out at the head of navigation on Otter Creek, it was named in honor of Count de Vergennes, a French Statesman.

The Charter of the City of Vergennes was procured through the influence of General Allen, who recognized the excellent location and the valuable natural resources of the city. Her situation was in the midst of a fertile and productive country, her water power was unrivaled, the whole body of water in Otter Creek, with a fall of thirty-seven feet was available for industrial purposes, the location for mills were peculiarly free from danger by reason of freshets, her means of transportation were all that could be desired, her people were intelligent, numbering among them some of the brightest minds of the State.



THE RESIDENCE OF GENERAL SAMUEL STRONG

The legislature of the State was convened in session at Vergennes, October 11th, 1789, and for many years thereafter, in a building erected for that purpose on the town lot back of the present city hall. His Excellency, Honorable Isaac Tichenor was Governor of Vermont at that time, and the Honorable Rosewell Hopkins of Vergennes was Secretary of State. Party Spirit ran high in Vermont during this period and for the first time in her history the important civil officers to be elected by the legislature were chosen from the dominant party exclusively, amid great excitement. Many able men even in the Supreme Court were refused election on party grounds merely, and this gave rise to the epithet current for a long time, "The Vergennes Slaughter House."

Mathew Lyon, a very able and prominent Irish Politician of Fair Haven was confined in the jail at Vergennes for many months serving

sentence imposed on him for violation of the alien and sedition law. While he was in jail he wrote many able political articles and by his own efforts he was re-elected to Congress. After his term of imprisonment expired, it was expected he would be re-arrested, but having been elected to Congress he, as soon as the door opened, proclaimed himself "on his way to Congress", and thus was free from further arrest.

The history of Vergennes has never been printed to any great extent, although many interesting tales and traditions have appeared from time to time in certain books and publications. It is unfortunate that the men who made the history of Vergennes had no leisure or inclination to write out for posterity the description of the scenes and events that transpired here.

Vergennes at the present time occupies the distinction of being the oldest and smallest city in the state. Although small in area and population, the city is progressive and prosperous in her municipal affairs, and its present inhabitants are healthy, contented and well-to-do.



THE PARK. THE SITE FOR THE MEMORIAL.

The population of Vergennes has been so changeable, and those who have been permanent residents here have been so extremely conservative that Vergennes today finds herself in the same position as many small New England towns, having experienced a small but healthy growth, abreast of the times, but not advanced in industrial development or enlarged in population to the extent that even her own loyal citizens would like to have had her.

But the prospects for the future are brighter than ever before in her history. The city has all the modern conveniences of a municipality, electric lights, good fire and police protection, excellent churches and public schools, and her main highways are steadily improving by the annual construction of permanent highways in the city limits.

The falls on Otter Creek, at Vergennes have a descent of thirty-seven feet and are divided into three distinct parts by two islands.

The water power on the falls is the finest in the State and hundreds of natural horse power is now harnessed for electric railroads and industrial purposes. Some of the power on the falls has already been improved and doubled in capacity in the last few years, so that the Vergennes Power Company now has power to sell for commercial use. There still remains a large quantity of power that could be improved and developed to a good advantage to turn the wheels of industry.

The transportation facilities on the river would be of great value to a large industry located below the falls. On the completion of the canals at the north and south ends of Lake Champlain, Vergennes will have direct communication by water with Montreal and the Great Lakes on the north and New York and the Atlantic seaports on the south. Although the railroad station is located quite a distance from the center of the city, the power from the falls can be transmitted to the station, and convenient sites for factories near the Rutland Railroad can be purchased at reasonable prices. The Rutland Railroad is now changing the looks of their yard and station, and the citizens of Vergennes are greatly pleased to see this needed improvement.



FORT CASSIN ON OTTER CREEK

The State industrial School for the reformation of unfortunate boys and girls of the State is located at Vergennes, and with the new buildings in the process of construction, this school will soon be a model institution of its kind. Vergennes has two good hotels, a solid bank, a progressive newspaper, a number of clean, up-to-date stores, and one of the finest libraries in the State, "The Bixby Memorial Library."

The location of Vergennes makes the city peculiarly fitted for a good trade center. Surrounded by a rich and fertile farming country, with all roads leading to the city and the lake only seven miles distant, where there are located many beautiful summer homes and cottages, the commercial resources of Vergennes are bound to grow.

Vergennes is surely destined to become one of the leading cities of Vermont, for beside the industrial progress that she will enjoy in the future, the city has an ideal location for a summer resort. Situa-

ted on Otter Creek, where boating and fishing can be enjoyed at all times, the lake only a few miles distant, and good roads leading to the Mountain resorts, the city only needs to exploit its attractions more freely and cooperate with a summer hotel that will cater for the summer tourists, in order to make Vergennes a "Mecca" for visitors from the large cities.

There have been a considerable number of changes in real estate during the past few years both in Vergennes and in the surrounding country. People from the cities who are looking for beautiful scenery, a healthy climate and good farms are investing in property in the Champlain Valley, improving the farms and fitting them out for comfortable summer homes. The people who are selling these farms are moving to Vergennes to reside, and both the country and the city are benefitted by these changes.

The city of Vergennes has always had an excellent reputation for hospitality, and has been very successful in the various celebrations that have been held here in the past.

The management of the present Centennial will make a special effort to maintain this proud record.